

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118350 TOSEC 010117

FOL VIENTIANE 3562 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CDR USSAG NKP
BANGKOK UDORN PARIS DIA CINCPAC MAY 21; REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3562

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT AEMR LA
SUBJ: PATHET LAO ACTIONS AGAINST USAID FACILITIES IN VIENTIANE

REF: TEARE-HENDERSON AND CHAPMAN-MILLER TELECONS

1. LPF-ORGANIZED AND INSPIRED ACTIONS BY STUDENTS AND OTHER
DEMONSTRATORS AGAINST USAID FACILITIES IN VIENTIANE, WHICH
BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER 0100 HOURS LOCAL TIME, CONTINUE AS OF
0800 HOURS LOCAL. SITUATION AT INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES IS AS
FOLLOWS:

A) NA HAI DIAO COMPOUND (USAID/DAO): THE ESTIMATED 150
TO 200 DEMONSTRATORS WHO ORIGINALLY ENTERED COMPOUND REMAIN
THERE. THEY HAVE CAUSED UNKNOWN AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL DAMAGE
TO SOME BUILDINGS; HAVE BROKEN INTO AMERICAN COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION RESTAURANT AND OBTAINED FOOD; AND HAVE ALSO
OBTAINED PAINT WHICH THEY ARE PROBABLY USING TO PAINT
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SLOGANS ON WALLS. TWO MARINE GUARDS, ONE FEDERAL ELEC-
TRIC CONTRACT EMPLOYEE, AND AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF LAO
REMAIN IN THE COMPOUND BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF
INJURIES. LOUDSPEAKERS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED AT TWO MAIN
GATES OF COMPOUND AND AN UNKNOWN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF

DEMONSTRATORS ARE OUTSIDE THE GATES. MIXED POLICE ARRIVED ON SCENE APPROX 0330 HOURS LOCAL AND REMAIN OUTSIDE COMPOUND BUT HAVE TAKEN NO RPT NO ACTION. THERE IS UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT SOME USAID EMPLOYEES HAVE JOINED DEMONSTRATORS.

B) USAID HOUSING AREA AT KM 6: SMALL NUMBER OF SUSPECTED PATHET LAO TROOPS IN FAR UNIFORMS MOUNTED GUARD APPROX 50 METERS OUTSIDE GATE TO KM 6 IN EARLY MORNING HOURS. THEY INITIALLY PERMITTED RESIDENTS TO DEPART WITH WARNING THAT ANYONE WHO DID SO WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RE-ENTER. ACCORDING TO A LAO NATIONAL WHO EXITED COMPOUND DURING THIS PERIOD WITH AN AMERICAN, THE PERSONS IN FAR UNIFORMS SPOKE WITH ACCENTS OF XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE. AT ABOUT DAWN, PERSONNEL DESCRIBED ABOVE WERE REPLACED BY FOUR OSTENSIBLE FAR MILITARY POLICE AND THREE STUDENTS, AND PRESENT POLICY IS THAT AMERICANS MAY ENTER AND LEAVE BUT MAY NOT BRING PROVISIONS IN WITH THEM; CARS ARE SUBJECT TO SEARCH. DOMESTIC SERVANTS AND OTHER LAO MAY LEAVE BUT NOT ENTER. MIXED POLICE ARE ALSO PRESENT AT KM 6 BUT ARE TAKING NO RPT NO ACTION. NO REPORTS OF HARRASSMENT OF KM 6 RESIDENTS.

C) USAID SUPPLY MANAGEMENT DIVISION WAREHOUSE COMPLEX AT KM 9: DEMONSTRATORS, REPORTEDLY ALSO IN MILITARY UNIFORMS, HAVE SIMILARLY BLOCKED ACCESS TO KM 9 COMPLEX SINCE SMALL HOURS. AT APPROX 0700, PATHET LAO TROOPS ORDERED LOCAL GUARD FORCE PERSONNEL (TAPS) ABOARD TRUCKS AND DELIVERED THEM TO TAPS HQ COMPOUND ON LANE XANG AVENUE.

2. TRUCK MANNED BY UNIDENTIFIED PERSONNEL PASSED TAPS HEADQUARTERS COMPOUND APPROX 0730 HOURS WITH LOUDSPEAKER BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ALL USAID FACILITIES HAVE BEEN SEIZED. AT ABOUT SAME TIME, DEMONSTRATORS ARRIVED IN FRONT OF MARINE GUARD QUARTERS ON THAT LUANG ROAD WHERE A GROUP OF 35 TO 40 IS NOW DISTRIBUTING LEAFLETS, POSSIBLY TO SAME EFFECT.

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3. COMPOSITION OF DEMONSTRATING GROUPS: APART FROM APPARENT SIGHTING OF PATHET LAO PERSONNEL IN FAR UNIFORMS AT KM 6 (ABOVE), MARINE GUARD ON DUTY IN MAIN USAID BUILDING HAS OBSERVED THAT MANY DEMONSTRATORS HAVE SHORT HAIRCUTS AND DO NOT RPT NOT LOOK LIKE TYPICAL VIENTIANE STUDENTS. DEGREE OF COORDINATION, AVAILABLE TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER FACTORS MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS IS AN LPF AND NOT RPT NOT MERELY A STUDENT ENTERPRISE.

4. IN LIGHT OF SITUATION, CLASSES AT AMERICAN SCHOOL HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. (SCHOOL BUSES ARE IN ANY EVENT SEQUESTERED IN NA HAI DIAO COMPOUND.) MARINE GUARD ON DUTY IN MAIN USAID BLDG IS OPERATING JOINT ALERT AND NOTIFICATION OFFICE (JANO) CITIZEN'S BAND RADIO NETWORK.

AMERICAN EMPLOYEES ARE BEING ADVISED TO EXERCISE CAUTION IN MOVING ABOUT CITY. LOCAL EMPLOYEES WHO REPORT FOR WORK AT CHANCERY AND USIS -- SO FAR UNAFFECTED -- ARE BEING EXCUSED.

5. CHARGE HAS MADE REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT PGNU OFFICIALS WITH FOLLOWING RESULTS:

A) CONTACTED MINISTER OF INTERIOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN AT APPROX 0330 TO REQUEST POLICE PROTECTION. PHENG ASSURED CHARGE THAT HE WOULD DIRECT JOINT POLICE TO DO SO. WHEN CALLED AN HOUR LATER, HE WAS TOLD PHENG HAD LEFT THE HOUSE. CHARGE ASSUMED THAT THIS WAS TO ROUSE THE POLICE.

B) AFTER FAILING TO REACH FONMIN PHOUMI VONVICHIT ALL NIGHT BECAUSE PHOUMI'S HOME TELEPHONE WAS EVIDENTLY OUT OF ORDER, CHARGE CALLED ON HIM AT 0630 TO REPORT SITUATION AND ASK POSITION OF GOVERNMENT: WAS IT IN FACT PREPARED TO INSURE PROTECTION OF FOREIGN PERSONS AND PROPERTY, OR HAD WE REACHED A STATE OF TOTAL ANARCHY? PHOUMI PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF -- AND EVEN FEIGNED SOME ASTONISHMENT AT -- OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN AWARE ONLY OF PLANS FOR RALLY AT NATIONAL STADIUM MAY 23 AND THAT ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN THAT THAT RALLY NOT BE CONVERTED INTO A DEMONSTRATION AND THAT VIOLENCE BE AVOIDED. CHARGE REQUESTED OFFICE CALL LATER IN MORNING BY WHICH TIME HE EXPECTED TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON.

C) CHARGE AGAIN SPOKE BY TELEPHONE WITH MINISTER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERIOR AT 0730 HOURS. HE TOLD PHENG THAT, WHILE MIXED POLICE HAD ARRIVED AT ALL THREE USAID FACILITIES SINCE THEIR LAST CONVERSATION, POLICE WERE SIMPLY STANDING BY. CHARGE AGAIN PROTESTED ENERGETICALLY THE LACK OF ADEQUATE PROTECTION. PHENG SAID HE WOULD ORDER POLICE TO CLEAR THE USAID COMPOUND AND LOOK INTO THE SITUATION AT THE KM 6 HOUSING AREA. HE ALSO REPEATED WHAT HE HAD MENTIONED EARLIER, THAT HE AND DEUANE WERE LEAVING FOR SAVANNAKHET THIS MORNING TO NEGOTIATE WITH DEMONSTRATORS THERE, WHICH IS OF COURSE WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET HIM TO DO SINCE LAST WEEK.

6. LATE REPORTS INDICATE THAT DEMONSTRATORS HAVE BROKEN INTO AMERICAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION COMMISSARY WAREHOUSE AND ARE THEMSELVES LOOTING IT OR PERMITTING OTHERS TO DO SO. SOME DEMONSTRATORS ARE DRINKING BEER ON STEPS OF ACA RESTAURANT. DEMONSTRATORS HAVE NOW TAKEN OVER USAID TELCOMMUNICATIONS BUILDING IN COMPOUND AND LAO OPERATOR SAYS HE CAN HANDLE NO MORE CALLS. AT LEAST TWO FILM OR TELEVISION CREWS (ONE EUROPEAN, ONE NON-LAO ASIAN) ARE FILMING THE DISORDER INSIDE NA HAI DIAO COMPOUND. CHAPMAN UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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